

## Proposal Guidelines and Approval Form

### LAS 667: Thesis

**Course Description:** Prepared under direction of a faculty member with full graduate faculty status from within the College of Arts and Sciences. Defended before a committee composed of the faculty director and two graduate faculty. Graded S/U. **Pre-requisite:** Completion of LAS 504, approval of thesis proposal, and permission of LAS director.

#### The Thesis

A thesis represents mastery of a particular subject area, and should investigate a topic requiring original research. The student should demonstrate appropriate academic preparation prior to its undertaking. With this in mind, it is the responsibility of the faculty director in consultation with the student to set parameters for the scope of the research, and to ensure that the research is current and that the response to that research is adequate.

#### The Thesis Proposal

The thesis proposal consists of a 250-500 word (approximate) description of the thesis. It should address the following:

- What is your main research question or focus? / What is the big question you are trying to answer?
- What is the current academic discourse surrounding this topic and what original contribution do you hope to make? / What sort of previous research has been done in this area? (note that citations are appropriate for the proposal)
- Why is what you are doing interesting and important?

The proposal should also include a working bibliography of at least 15 scholarly and/or primary texts.

#### The Thesis Committee

Ideally the student asks a faculty member with whom they have previously studied to direct the thesis. The faculty director and student should agree on two additional committee members. The role of the committee members should be determined among the faculty director and members (e.g., advisory, judicial, content-oriented, editorial) so that everyone understands their role and expectations. The student should also talk with the faculty director about when to share drafts with the committee members.

It is highly recommended that the faculty director and student share the thesis proposal and planned schedule for completion with the committee as early as possible in the process so everyone is clear on expectations and timeline.

The faculty director must be someone with full graduate faculty status within the College of Arts and Sciences. The committee members must have associate or full graduate faculty status within the university. Please note that graduate faculty status is separate from promotion status (i.e., assistant, associate, or full professor). A list of faculty and their status for each department can be found in the School of Graduate Studies Graduate Catalog.

Changes to the committee should be made in consultation with the faculty director, and the faculty director or student should notify the LAS director of any changes.

## Thesis Length

Thesis length can vary, depending on the field, but is usually 40-70 pages.

## Timeline

At the beginning of the semester before the student plans to enroll in thesis hours: the student should meet with the LAS director to discuss interests and options. That same semester will then be used to find and meet with a faculty director and prepare a proposal. *The student will not be registered for thesis hours until they have a proposal approved by both the faculty director and LAS director.*

It is strongly recommended that students break up their thesis hours over at least two semesters. Generally, a student who has a proposal ready and begins research at the beginning of the summer, then sticks to a good research and writing schedule throughout fall and spring, will be able to complete the thesis in time for a May graduation.

By the end of the semester before graduation: student should have submitted a draft of at least one chapter and received feedback; student should also have a schedule for the subsequent semester.

At least 8 weeks before the graduation semester ends: student should have submitted a complete draft of the thesis to their faculty director; the rest of the semester will consist of back and forth between the student, director, and committee on feedback and revisions.

At least 4 weeks before the graduation semester ends: the student and committee should agree on a defense or presentation date that is prior to the last Friday of classes.

**The thesis must be defended, final revisions must be made, and the thesis must be submitted electronically with signature page to the School of Graduate Studies no later than 11:59pm on the last Friday of classes (before exams week).**

## Thesis Defense/Presentation

At a minimum, each student must present to the committee on their thesis prior to submitting it to the School of Graduate Studies. The defense or presentation may be open to the public or closed. For specifics, students should consult with their faculty director and are encouraged to follow the guidelines within the faculty director's discipline.

## Thesis Copies

All students will automatically be directed through the electronic submission process to order a copy of their thesis for the university. Students must also order a copy for the Liberal Arts and Sciences program, and it is professional courtesy to order a copy for one's faculty director as well. However, the latter two copies do not have to be ordered through ProQuest; talk with faculty or the School of Graduate Studies about other options.

## Additional Resources for Exit Options

*Graduate School Guidelines on Thesis Formatting and Submission:*  
[http://www.wiu.edu/graduate\\_studies/current\\_students/index.php](http://www.wiu.edu/graduate_studies/current_students/index.php)

*For students with a science focus:* [http://www.wiu.edu/cas/biological\\_sciences/graduate/index.php](http://www.wiu.edu/cas/biological_sciences/graduate/index.php)

*For students with a humanities focus:*  
[http://www.wiu.edu/cas/english\\_and\\_journalism/graduate/resources.php](http://www.wiu.edu/cas/english_and_journalism/graduate/resources.php)

*For students with a social science focus:* <http://www.wiu.edu/cas/sociology/grad/>

